

Oct. 1, 2003

Port Weathers Isabel Nicely, WTC Not So

The wrath of Hurricane Isabel left its imprint on MPA Headquarters at the World Trade Center, while the public terminals serving the international shipping community fared far better.

Basement flooding up to 16 feet forced closure of the Pratt Street building for at least a month (MPA employees have been temporarily relocated to Point Breeze). Port officials reported that the entire phone and electrical systems would need to be replaced and that the mechanical systems suffered between 60 and 80 percent damage. Initial assessments for repairs range in the neighborhood of \$8 - \$10 million.

The Port's terminals survived in healthier shape. Despite eight-foot storm surges that breached the bulkheads, and strong southerly winds and a high tide, only a few sausage bumpers, wharf logs, and maintenance shacks were destroyed. Flooded areas quickly receded after the storm, although water did creep into a transition shed slightly damaging 100 rolls of paper.

"Baltimore's auto cargoes received some damage as the surging waters created pools in several low-lying storage areas," noted Mel Bafford of the Marketing Department. "It truly was a once-in-a-century storm."

Nearly 300 years old, the Port of Baltimore has consistently remained one of the top U.S. ports for several reasons. Located more than 150 miles inland, Baltimore is the closest U.S. Atlantic seaport to major mid-Western destinations and manufacturing centers. Nestled in the heart of the fourth largest, second wealthiest consumer market in the nation, Baltimore is a prime distribution location. The public terminals of the Port of Baltimore recently surpassed a brand new milestone...7 million tons of general cargo in FY 2003.

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